United Nations A/60/393–S/2005/616

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
29 September 2005
English
Original: French

General Assembly
Sixtieth session
Agenda item 98 (a)
Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Sixtieth year

Letter dated 27 September 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the Committee on its twenty-third ministerial meeting, held from 29 August to 2 September in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 98 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Basile **Ikouebe**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

05-53019 (E) 201005 241005

Annex to the letter dated 27 September 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa on its twenty-third ministerial meeting

Brazzaville, 29 August-2 September 2005

I. Introduction

The twenty-third ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, from 29 August to 2 September 2005.

All member States took part in the meeting: the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Chad, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by the Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the Republic of the Congo, Mr. Amadou Ouattara;
- A message from the Chairman of the African Union, read out by the Special Representative of the Chairman of the Commission of the African Union in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Martin Bongo;
- A message from the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), read out by the Deputy Secretary-General for human integration, peace, security and stability, Mr. Nelson M. Cosme;
- The opening address by Mr. Isidore Mvouba, Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo, with responsibility for the coordination of Government action and privatizations.

The closing address was delivered by Mr. Rodolphe Adada, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and la Francophonie.

II. Summary of proceedings

The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda of the twenty-third ministerial meeting.
2. Interim report of the Bureau by its chairman.
3. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in some countries members of the Committee:

(i) Republic of Burundi

(ii) Central African Republic

(iii) Democratic Republic of the Congo

(iv) Situation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda

(v) Republic of Chad

(vi) Reconvening of the high-level tripartite meeting among Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad on cross-border insecurity.

4. Exchange of experiences in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for former combatants in Central Africa.

5. Review of the implementation of the Brazzaville Declaration on the implementation in Central Africa of the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, adopted at the twenty-second ministerial meeting.

6. Cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS: follow-up to the 2003 United Nations multidisciplinary assessment mission to Central Africa.

7. Review of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects: report by the countries members of the Committee on the implementation of the Programme of Priority Activities adopted at the conclusion of the Brazzaville seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

8. Status of preparations for the 2005 Bahr-el-Ghazal joint military exercise.

9. Report on the activities of the ECCAS secretariat in the areas of peace, security and stability.

10. Adoption of the Committee's programme of work for the period 2005-2006.

11. Adoption of the resolution on the activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

12. Date and place of the next meeting.

13. Other matters.

14. Adoption of the report of the twenty-third ministerial meeting.

A. Interim report of the Bureau by its Chairman

1. The Committee noted with interest the interim report on the activities of the Bureau, submitted by its Chairman.

2. It commended the Bureau for the dynamism with which it had performed its duties and for its active contribution, in cooperation with the secretariat, to the preparation and organization of the twenty-third ministerial meeting.

3. The Committee also commended the Bureau's efforts, together with the secretariat, to obtain Spanish and Portuguese translation services for the twenty-third meeting and future meetings.

B. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in some countries members of the Committee

4. The security situation in Central Africa, particularly in the countries covered by the review, had improved considerably since the Committee's previous meeting. The peace processes under way in most of the countries concerned had resulted in the holding of free and democratic elections.

5. That positive development should not, however, obscure the fact that the processes in question remained fragile and that the parties concerned, the other countries of the subregion and the international community must continue their efforts to consolidate peace and usher in a new era of development and prosperity for the countries and peoples of the subregion.

(i) Republic of Burundi

6. The Committee welcomed the progress made in the situation in Burundi, including:

- The progress made towards the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and the reform of the defence and security forces;
- The peaceful conduct of communal, legislative, senatorial and presidential elections, as provided for in the electoral law;
- The conclusion of the transition period with the election of Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza to the office of President of the Republic on 19 August 2005, the swearing-in of the President of the Republic on 26 August 2005 and the appointment of the first post-transition Government on 30 August 2005.

7. The Committee warmly congratulated the people and leaders of Burundi, the international community as a whole and, in particular, the countries of the Regional Initiative for Burundi, as well as the various mediators and other actors who had been unremitting and steadfast in their admirable efforts to bring about those results.

8. It extolled the commitment made by the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) following its victory in the legislative elections to start talks with the one remaining active rebel group, Mr. Agathon Rwasa's Forces nationales de libération (Palipehutu-FNL).

9. The Committee urged Palipehutu-FNL to abide by the commitments it had made to the Tanzanian authorities, namely:

- To submit a written report on the Gatumba massacres of August 2004, and
- To sign, without delay, a ceasefire agreement with the Government of Burundi and to return to the peace process under the Arusha Agreement.

10. The Committee hailed the progress made in reforming the defence and security forces, especially through the programme for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, the settlement of the problem of harmonizing military ranks and the initial training and deployment of integrated units of the National Defence Force and the National Police.

11. The Committee welcomed the fact that the military situation in Burundi had remained stable since its last meeting. It nevertheless expressed its deep concern at the persistence of human rights violations by some members of the defence and security forces and by armed groups.

12. While expressing its appreciation for the invaluable assistance supplied by the international community throughout the process that had recently resulted in democratically elected institutions, the Committee appealed to the various actors on the Burundian political scene and to bilateral and multilateral donors, who had helped the Burundian people to achieve peace, to continue to help them in rebuilding peace.

(ii) Central African Republic

13. The Committee welcomed the positive developments that had taken place in the Central African Republic since it had last met, including the successful completion of the electoral process with the holding of legislative and presidential elections in March and May 2005, which had marked the country's return to the rule of law, and the following political events:

- Investiture of the President of the Republic, Mr François Bozize Yangouvonda;
- Appointment of the Prime Minister and Head of Government, Mr. Elie Dote;
- Installation of the officers of the National Assembly and election of its President, Mr. Célestin Le Roy Gaombale;
- Holding of the first legislative session;
- Submission of the Government's General Policy Letter for adoption by the legislature;
- Holding of the National Seminar on Disarmament;
- Resumption of cooperation with the African Union and the international community, including the Bretton Woods institutions.

14. The Committee warmly congratulated the people and leaders of the Central African Republic on the maturity they had displayed through the peaceful conduct of the elections and the candidates' acceptance of the results.

15. It also welcomed the invaluable contribution of the international community, in particular the Central African Republic's multilateral and bilateral partners, especially ECCAS, to the organization and conduct of the elections.

16. The Committee nevertheless expressed grave concern at the persistence of the precarious security and humanitarian situation, notably in the northern areas of the country, where there had been a resurgence of attacks by armed groups and by individuals who set up roadblocks.

17. It strongly condemned the many acts of violence perpetrated against the people by those groups and deplored their consequences in terms of large-scale population displacements and cross-border insecurity.

18. It welcomed the determination of the Central African authorities to combat that phenomenon, in cooperation with neighbouring countries, and, in that connection, commended the convening, in Yaoundé, on 25 and 26 August 2005, of a tripartite meeting among Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad, which had resulted in the adoption of common, concerted measures to combat those groups' activities.

19. While welcoming the progress made in restructuring the armed forces, the Committee nevertheless deplored the persistence of human rights violations both in Bangui and in the country's interior.

The Committee appealed to:

- Bilateral and multilateral donors and international financial institutions to pay special attention to the economic and financial situation of the Central African Republic and to provide it with the necessary support;
- The States members of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC) to maintain and, where possible, intensify their efforts to make the country more secure, including through general and complete disarmament and the restructuring of the defence and security forces;
- The other countries of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and to the international community to provide the country's authorities with the financial means needed to ensure the security of the people of the Central African Republic.

(iii) Democratic Republic of the Congo

20. The Committee welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the transition process, including:

- The launching, on 6 May 2005, of the plan of operations for the security of the electoral process;
- The adoption of the draft constitution on 13 May 2005;
- The signing by the vast majority of registered political parties on 1 June 2005, of a code of conduct formulated by the Independent Electoral Commission to govern electoral activities;
- The start-up of voter registration;
- Appointments to the *petite territoriale* (local administration), the diplomatic corps and State-owned enterprises.

21. Bearing in mind the difficulties that had led to the extension of the transition period beyond 30 June 2005, the Committee encouraged the Independent Electoral Commission to forge ahead in preparing for the elections.

22. The Committee commended the efforts of the international community to defuse the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and support the transition process through the following actions:

- The arrival in Kinshasa of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and envoys from the African Union and the European Union;

- The visit to Kinshasa on 24 June 2005 of the current chairman of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the convening in Kinshasa, on 16 July 2005, of a quadripartite summit of the Heads of State of Angola, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon, held within the framework of the mandate entrusted to the current Chairman at the twelfth session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS;

- The meetings held in Kinshasa, Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire by Mrs. Sassou Nguesso, wife of the Congolese Head of State, with the wives of political and civil-society leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

23. The Committee expressed profound concern at the persistence of the precarious security situation in Ituri and the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu as a result of the criminal activities of militias and armed groups responsible for acts such as the large-scale massacre of civilians, sexual violence and repeated attacks on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

24. It welcomed the vigorous action taken by the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUC to disarm the militias and improve security in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

25. It encouraged the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take the action needed to establish its authority over the whole of the Ituri district.

26. It urged the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours to prevent any direct or indirect support, delivery of arms or any other form of assistance to armed groups operating in the region and deny use of any territory by armed groups to carry out acts of aggression or subversion against any State in the region.

27. The Committee strongly condemned the threats made by mutinous officers to renew hostilities in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

28. The Committee welcomed the decision of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to use force to disarm foreign armed groups in the eastern part of the country. It enjoined the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) to respect the commitment they had made in Rome on 31 March 2005 to renounce the armed struggle and to settle without delay the issue of their militias' repatriation.

29. It noted with satisfaction the Security Council's decision of 29 July 2005 to extend until 31 July 2006 the arms embargo imposed on all groups operating in North and South Kivu and Ituri.

30. The Committee welcomed the progress made with the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, under which 15,607 combatants from various Ituri militias had been disarmed.

31. It nevertheless expressed concern at the difficulties encountered with the reintegration of former combatants into civilian life and the integration of former militia members into the armed forces.

32. The Committee commended the efforts of MONUC and requested the United Nations to continue to support the peace process under way in the country.

33. It appealed to the international community to support the efforts of the Transitional Government and the Congolese people in the areas of reconstruction, national reconciliation and preparations for the elections.

(iv) Situation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda

34. The Committee noted with satisfaction the improvement in the situation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda, which was attributable in part to the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo held at Lubumbashi on 21 April 2005 in the framework of the tripartite meeting facilitated by the United States of America.

35. It welcomed the commitment by the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to continue their efforts aimed at reopening their diplomatic missions as soon as possible, and encouraged them to complete that positive step.

36. It nevertheless expressed concern at the continued presence of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and other hostile forces in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and commended the determination expressed by both countries to put an end to their presence and activities.

37. It reaffirmed its support for the effective implementation of the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, taken in Libreville on 10 January 2005, to help disarm by force the former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR)/Interahamwe and other hostile forces operating in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the decision to send the appropriate preliminary evaluation missions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.

38. It endorsed the decision taken at the ministerial meeting of the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda-Uganda Tripartite Commission, held in Kigali on 24 and 25 August 2005, to give FDLR an ultimatum to disarm voluntarily by 30 September 2005.

39. It strongly supported the measures envisaged by the above-mentioned Tripartite Commission in the event of a refusal by FDLR to disarm voluntarily within that time frame.

40. It urgently called upon the States members of the Committee and the international community as a whole to support and contribute to the effective implementation of those measures, thereby ensuring the successful conduct of the electoral process throughout the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

41. In order to underscore the importance it attached to that issue, the Committee adopted a Declaration on the improvement in the situation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda.

(v) Republic of Chad

42. The Committee welcomed the positive developments which had taken place in Chad's domestic and external situation. Those developments included:

- The organization of a referendum, on 6 June 2005, concerning the revision of certain constitutional provisions, whose final outcome was announced on 21 July 2005;
- The organization of a general meeting on the army in April 2005;
- The organization of forums, seminars and awareness campaigns for different strata of the population and State actors on the process of decentralizing the management of public property;
- The pursuit of mediation efforts with the African Union, bilateral and multilateral donors and other actors in the international community for the purpose of resolving the crisis in Darfur in neighbouring Sudan;
- The convening of the fifth meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the armies of the Central African countries in preparation for the establishment of a regional standby brigade and the organization of the 2005 Bahr-el-Ghazal multinational military exercise.

43. The Committee welcomed the agreement of 21 August 2005 whereby 600 combatants of the armed faction of the Mouvement pour la Démocratie et la Justice au Tchad (MDJT) had realigned themselves with the Chadian Government. The Committee encouraged the Government to pursue its efforts towards the reconciliation of all the citizens of Chad.

44. However, the Committee expressed concern about the resurgence of insecurity in the eastern and southern border regions of Chad and about the massive influx of refugees from the Sudan, most of whom possessed weapons of war, and from the Central African Republic.

45. The Committee appealed to the international community to continue to provide support and the necessary aid to refugees, as well as to support the effective implementation of the various projects to be carried out pursuant to the United Nations Programme of Action against light weapons and the programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

(vi) Reconvening of the high-level tripartite meeting among Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad on cross-border insecurity

46. The Committee noted with interest the report submitted by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) on the high-level tripartite meeting among Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad, held in Yaoundé on 25 and 26 August 2005 at the request of the Secretary-General and the Security Council for the collective discussion of ways and means of long-term prevention and/or containment of insecurity along their common borders caused by persons who set up roadblocks and by other armed gangs.

47. It welcomed the bilateral and tripartite measures agreed upon at that meeting to tackle the phenomenon, in particular:

At the bilateral level

- Expansion of the exchange of security data;
- Provision of advance notification of planned border operations, with possible exchanges of liaison officers;
- Use of aerial observation;
- Reactivation of the mixed commissions;

At the tripartite level

- Increased contacts between border authorities (administrative authorities, defence and security forces);
- Expansion of data and information exchanges;
- Organization of joint operations;
- Periodic assessment of the security situation along the borders.

48. The Committee also welcomed the creation, in each of the three States, of national structures responsible for efforts to combat the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, as well as consciousness-raising initiatives aimed at the civilian population.

49. It supported the countries' appeal to the international community, in particular to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for increased aid to the countries of the subregion, especially Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad, which were facing difficulties due to the influx of refugees and displaced persons and the implementation of demobilization and reintegration programmes for former combatants, including child soldiers.

50. The Committee was pleased that the meeting's results had included the swift establishment of a mechanism for cooperation and management of issues related to cross-border insecurity, and appealed to the international community to support the efforts made in that regard.

III. Exchange of experiences in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for former combatants in Central Africa

51. During the exchange of experiences between delegations with respect to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for former combatants that were under way in their respective countries, the Committee expressed its deep concern at the severe shortage of funds for the launching or effective implementation of such programmes in countries of the subregion that were emerging from situations of conflict, and at the many difficulties encountered in the implementation of such programmes.

52. It considered that the excessive delays and the many imbalances that had affected the conduct of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes as a result of the lack of funds entailed real risks of engendering renewed clashes and

jeopardizing the strenuous efforts which had been made to restore peace, security and development in the countries concerned.

53. In the course of the proceedings the Republic of Angola shared its positive experience in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, which had led to the re-establishment of an effective peace since April 2002 and to the reconciliation, national reconstruction and development process currently under way.

54. The Committee urgently appealed to:

- The member States emerging from conflict situations to make the necessary efforts to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for former combatants;
- The international community, and donors in particular, to provide substantial assistance to the countries concerned to enable them to implement such programmes within the established time frames.

IV. Review of the implementation of the Brazzaville Declaration on the implementation in Central Africa of the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, adopted at the twenty-second ministerial meeting

55. The Committee reaffirmed that it attached great importance to the Dar-es-Salaam process and recalled the commitments made concerning that process within the framework of the Brazzaville Declaration.

56. It welcomed the active participation of the countries members of ECCAS in preparing the project descriptions and protocols to be adopted at the summit on the Great Lakes region to be held in Nairobi in November 2005, and urged them to participate actively in the summit itself as well as in the preparatory activities.

57. It noted with interest the information provided in that regard by the countries participating in the process, and reiterated its intention to include the relevant item on the agenda of future meetings so that all its members would be kept fully informed of the progress of the Dar-es-Salaam process.

58. It stressed the need for the institutions of the subregion to work within the framework of the mechanisms provided for in the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration.

59. The Committee stressed the need for all its member States to take into account the Dar-es-Salaam process in their statements at the next session of the United Nations General Assembly, and in particular to promote the idea of declaring the Great Lakes region a specific reconstruction and development area.

V. Cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS: follow-up to the 2003 United Nations multidisciplinary assessment mission to Central Africa

60. The Committee noted with interest the presentation given by the representative of the Chairman of ECCAS and representative of the Chairman of the Committee on the steps taken at United Nations Headquarters in New York by the Group of Ambassadors of the Central African countries to promote the implementation of the results of the United Nations multidisciplinary mission that had visited the subregion in 2003, and on the adoption on 14 July 2005 of a General Assembly resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS.

61. It congratulated the Group of Ambassadors of the Central African countries for its efforts in that regard and encouraged it to pursue its contacts with the United Nations Secretary-General and with the other Member States, with a view to implementing the results of the mission, including the establishment of a United Nations office in Central Africa, in accordance with the wishes of all the countries of the subregion.

62. It decided to keep the issue on the agenda and to discuss it again at its future meetings.

VI. Review of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

63. The Committee noted with interest the presentation by Ms. Pamela Maponga, Secretary of the Committee, on the work of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to review the implementation, at the national, regional and international levels, of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 11 to 15 July 2005.

64. It regretted that few of the States members of the Committee had produced a national report on the implementation of the Programme of Action, and reminded them that the United Nations was willing to provide countries, upon request, with technical assistance for the preparation of national reports.

65. The Committee urged its member States to take an active part in the preparations for and conduct of the conference to be held in New York in July 2006 to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as in the preparatory meeting to be held in January 2006.

VII. Status of preparations for the 2005 Bahr-el-Ghazal joint military exercise

66. The Committee noted with interest the information provided by the Chadian delegation on the status of preparations for the 2005 Bahr-el-Ghazal joint military exercise to be carried out in that country in November 2005.

67. It welcomed the offer from Angola and Cameroon to provide transport for troops from some of the countries participating in the exercise, as well as the offer from Cameroon and Gabon to provide Chad with air and ground logistics in the context of the exercise, and noted with satisfaction that Angola, Burundi, Cameroon and Chad had paid their contributions in full.

68. It also welcomed the confirmation by all member States during the meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff held in Luanda on 13 and 14 April 2005, that they would be participating in the exercise.

69. It expressed its concern at the delay in the payment of contributions thus far and urged countries that had not yet done so to pay their contributions in full as soon as possible so that the preparatory work could continue and the exercise could be held on the scheduled dates.

VIII. Report on the activities of the ECCAS secretariat in the areas of peace, security and stability

70. The Committee took note with interest of the report submitted by the secretariat of ECCAS on its activities in the areas of peace, security and stability.

71. It welcomed in particular the secretariat's actions in relation to the Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC), including:

- The establishment of a regional standby brigade and regional headquarters, to be provisionally located in Libreville until 2007, in the context of the establishment of an African standby force;
- Preparations for and the holding of the fourth and fifth meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which had taken place in Luanda on 13 and 14 April 2005 and in N'Djamena on 7 and 8 July 2005;
- Training for commanders of peacekeeping forces and military observers, as well as technical workshops.

72. The Committee welcomed the progress made towards the launch of the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC), in particular the completion by ECCAS, with the assistance of the European Union, of the project to support conflict prevention and peace initiatives in Central Africa and reach a funding agreement in the context of the Regional Indicative Programme, which provided for:

- Technical support and materiel procurement support;
- Support for the launching of MARAC;
- Support for civil-society organizations active in the areas of peace and security;
- Support for ECCAS actions in the areas of diplomacy and conflict prevention.

73. Lastly, the Committee noted:

- The contribution of ECCAS in providing assistance and observers for electoral activities in member States;
- Participation in the process initiated by the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

IX. Adoption of the Committee's programme of work for the period 2005-2006

74. The Committee included the following activities in its programme of work for the period 2005-2006:

- Organization of the Committee's twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth ministerial meetings;
- Organization of a meeting of experts from countries members of the Committee to discuss the issues of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; small arms and light weapons; cross-border problems; and security-sector reform;
- Organization of a seminar on the involvement of civil society in the implementation of the Programme of Priority Activities on small arms, adopted in Brazzaville in 2003.

X. Adoption of the resolution on the activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

75. The Committee adopted a resolution on its activities, which will be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

XI. Date and place of the next meeting

76. The Committee decided to hold its twenty-fourth ministerial meeting in Sao Tome in February 2006; the exact dates will be agreed upon by the secretariat and the host country.

XII. Other matters

77. The Committee reminded its focal points in member States to submit to the secretariat, one month before each ministerial meeting, any information relevant to its reviews of the geopolitical and security situation.

XIII. Adoption of the report of the twenty-third ministerial meeting

78. On 2 September 2005 the Committee considered and adopted the report of the twenty-third ministerial meeting.

The participants expressed satisfaction at the positive atmosphere in which they had conducted their deliberations and expressed their appreciation to Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, and to the Government and people of the Congo for the warm welcome and kind hospitality they had received during their stay in the Republic of the Congo.

Brazzaville, 2 September 2005

Annex

Brazzaville Declaration on the situation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda

The participants in the twenty-third ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, meeting in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, from 29 August to 2 September 2005,

Noting with satisfaction the improvement in the situation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda, in particular the encouraging outcomes of the meetings of the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda-Uganda Tripartite Commission on security in that part of the Great Lakes region,

Taking note of the shared commitment of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda to continue their efforts aimed at reopening, as soon as possible, diplomatic missions in each other's countries,

Expressing their concern, however, at the continued presence of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and other hostile forces in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and at their negative effect on peace and security in that part of the Great Lakes region as well as at the refusal of FDLR to disarm voluntarily, in accordance with the declaration it signed in Rome on 31 March 2005,

Reaffirming their support for the effective implementation of the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, taken in Libreville on 10 January 2005, regarding the forced disarmament of the former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR)/Interahamwe and other hostile forces operating in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the decision to send the appropriate preliminary evaluation missions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi,

Welcome the commitment of the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to continue their efforts aimed at reopening their respective embassies, and encourage them to complete that positive step,

Endorse the decision taken at the ministerial meeting of the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda-Uganda Tripartite Commission, held in Kigali on 24 and 25 August 2005, to give FDLR an ultimatum to disarm voluntarily by 30 September 2005,

Strongly support the measures envisaged by the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda-Uganda Tripartite Commission in the event of a refusal by FDLR to disarm voluntarily within that time frame,

Urgently call upon States members of the Committee and the international community as a whole to support and contribute to the effective implementation of those measures, thereby ensuring the successful conduct of the electoral process throughout the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Brazzaville, 2 September 2005